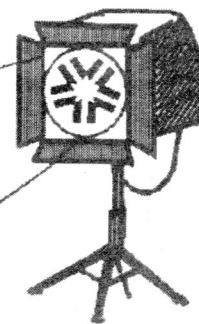


DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA OFFICE ON AGING

Spotlight On Aging



VOLUME XIX, ISSUE 4

A newsletter for D.C. Seniors

April 2004

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



By E. Veronica Pace

Over the past few weeks, District residents have been alerted to the possibility of lead in our drinking water. We have heard a lot of information from a lot of sources that leave a lot of questions.

We have included in this issue of "Spotlight on Aging" a brochure from the Water and Sewer Authority that explains lead in drinking water and describes steps residents can take to minimize consumption of lead.

April 8 is National Alcohol Screening Day for seniors. Visit one of the District's screening sites on that day and find out if you are at risk. Seniors should control their alcohol intake because of the serious complications that are possible with prescription and over-the-counter drugs.

The Office on Aging is gearing up for our Older Americans Month activities under the theme "Aging Well, Living Well." Remember Senior Day is early this year, so make sure you call to reserve your tickets.

We are back at the D.C. Armory this year after we got a taste of the new Convention Center in 2003. Senior Day is scheduled for Thursday, May 6 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., and the doors will open at 10 a.m.

Enjoy free health screenings, health and wellness exhibits, fitness demonstrations, line dancing, music, live entertainment and lunch. The event is free for District residents 60 years of age and older, but tickets are required. Call 202-727-6604 to reserve your tickets.

Free Prostate Cancer Screening April 7th • 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

No appointment necessary

Behind the Russell House Office Building
(C street, N.E., between Delaware Avenue
and 1st Street)

www.pcacoalition.org

888-245-4955

Managed by the National Prostate Cancer Coalition

An Information Guide on Lead in Drinking Water

Brought to you by the District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority

The District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority (WASA) is concerned about lead in your drinking water. Although most homes have very low levels of lead in their drinking water, some homes in the community have lead levels above the EPA action level of 15 parts per billion (ppb), or 0.015 milligrams of lead per liter of water (mg/L).

Under federal law, the water supplier is required to have a program in place to minimize lead in your drinking water. The Washington Aqueduct (WA) Division of the Army Corps of Engineers is the wholesale supplier of water to WASA. In compliance with federal requirements, WA has performed an optimal corrosion control study to minimize lead in the drinking water. The Optimal Corrosion Control Treatment (OCCT) was designated for WA by the EPA, and OCCT was implemented by WA in 1993.

The OCCT implemented by the WA applies to the WASA water distribution system as WA is a wholesale supplier of drinking water and has no distribution system of its own. Under the OCCT requirements, a pH of 7.4 to 7.7 must be maintained at the entry points to the distribution system and a minimum pH of 7.0 is to be maintained in the distribution system. The purpose of the OCCT is to control the corrosivity of water and thus minimize leaching of lead or copper from lead service lines and customer plumbing into drinking water.

This program includes corrosion control treatment, source water treatment, and public education.

We are also required to replace the portion of each lead service line that we own if the line contributes lead concentrations of more than 15 ppb after we have completed the comprehensive treatment program. If you have any questions about how we are carrying out the requirements of the lead regulation, please e-mail us at WQP2003@dcwasa.com or give us a call at 202-787-2732.

This article explains the simple steps you can take to protect you and your family by reducing your exposure to lead in drinking water.

Health Effects of Lead

Lead is a common metal found throughout the environment in lead-based paint; air; soil; household dust; food; certain types of pottery, porcelain and pewter; and water. Lead can pose a significant risk to your health if too much of it enters your body.

Lead builds up in the body over many years and can cause damage to the brain, red blood cells and kidneys. The greatest risk is to young children and pregnant women. Amounts of lead that won't hurt adults can slow down normal mental and physical development of growing

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Searching for Outstanding Older Workers

The D.C. Office on Aging is currently soliciting nominations from businesses and individuals for the District of Columbia's 2004 Outstanding Older Worker. Applicants must be 65 years of age or older, a resident of the District of Columbia, currently employed, and work at least 20 hours each week for pay.

The honoree will participate in the Experience Works Prime Time Award Program events held here in the District, October 5 to 9. Applicants who are part of a subsidized employment program funded by the local, state or national government are not eligible for this award.

Official nomination forms may be obtained from — and mailed, faxed, or e-mailed to — Prime Time Awards, c/o John James, D.C. Office on Aging, 441 4th Street, N.W., Suite 900, Washington, D.C. 20001. Or you may call 202-727-8360. A

nomination form can be accessed online at www.experience-works.org. The deadline for nominations is April 30.

The search for America's Oldest Worker for 2004 is also under way.

During the 2004 Prime Time Awards, the honoree, along with other winners from across the nation, will tour the city's landmarks and attend meetings with congressional representatives, U.S. Senate and U.S. House events, and the awards banquet and ceremony at the Ronald Reagan Building.

Experience Works is a national, nonprofit organization that provides training and employment services for mature workers. Established in 1965 as Green Thumb, and renamed Experience Works in 2002, the organization reaches more than 125,000 mature individuals in all 50 states and Puerto Rico each year.



GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

ANTHONY A. WILLIAMS, MAYOR

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bodies. In addition, a child at play often comes into contact with sources of lead contamination - like dirt and dust - that rarely affect an adult. It is important to wash children's hands and toys often, and to try to make sure they only put food in their mouths.

Lead in Drinking Water

Lead in drinking water, although rarely the sole cause of lead poisoning, can significantly increase a person's total lead exposure, particularly the exposure of infants who drink baby formulas and concentrated juices that are mixed with water from homes with lead service lines and/or plumbing systems. The EPA estimates that drinking water can make up 20 percent or more of a person's total exposure to lead.

How Lead Enters Our Drinking Water

Lead is unusual among drinking water contaminants in that it seldom occurs naturally in water supplies like rivers and lakes. Lead enters drinking water primarily as a result of the corrosion, or wearing away, of materials containing lead in the water distribution system and household plumbing.

Important Contacts for Lead Questions

D.C. Department of Health

(For blood testing information)

www.dchealth.dc.gov

202-671-0733

D.C. WASA

(Lead hotline)

www.dcwasa.com

202-787-2732

D.C. Government

(General questions)

www.dc.gov

202-727-1000

Drop-off sites for lead samples:

WASA encourages residents to drop off water samples at one of the following six sites. Residents may also call the hotline to have samples picked up at their homes:

- **301 Bryant St., N.W.**
(open 24 hours/7 days)
- **810 First St., N.E.**
(open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.)
- **Ft. Reno Pumping Station, 3900 Donaldson Place, N.W.**
(open Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Saturdays, noon to 3 p.m.)
- **Blue Plains Wastewater Treatment Plant, 5000 Overlook Avenue, S.W.**
(open 24 hours/7 days)
- **125 O St., S.E.**
(open 24 hours/7 days)
- **Dalecarlia Treatment Plant, 5900 MacArthur Blvd., N.W.**
(open Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.)



Ms. Senior D.C. Ellen Odellas Van Edwards (center) presented a \$2,000 check to the Children's Inn at NIH as part of her third prize Konze Award from Senior America, Inc. Also pictured are Daisy Savage, Ms. Senior D.C. 2002 (far left); Jaquetta Patrick, Ms. Senior D.C. 2000; and Myrtle Smith Gardiner Church, Ms. Senior D.C. 2001.

These materials include lead-based solder used to join copper pipe, brass and chrome-plated brass faucets, and in some cases, pipes made of lead that connect your house to the water main (service lines). In 1986, Congress banned the use of lead solder containing greater than 0.2 percent lead, and restricted the lead content of faucets, pipes, and other plumbing materials to 8.0 percent.

When water stands in lead pipes or plumbing systems containing lead for several hours or more, the lead may dissolve into your drinking water. This means the first water drawn from the tap in the morning, or later in the afternoon after returning from work or school, can contain fairly high levels of lead.

Steps to Reduce Exposure to Lead in Drinking Water

Despite our best efforts mentioned earlier to control water corrosivity and remove lead from the water supply, lead levels in some homes or buildings can be high because service lines and internal plumbing systems can contribute lead to water delivered by those pipes. To find out whether you need to take action in your own home, have your drinking water tested to determine if it contains excessive concentrations of lead.

Testing the water is essential because you cannot see, taste or smell lead in drinking water. Some local laboratories that can provide this service are listed at the end of this article. For more information on having your water tested, please e-mail us at WQP2003@dcwasa.com or call us at 202-787-2732.

If a water test indicates that the drinking water drawn from a tap in your home contains lead above 15 ppb, then you should take the following precautions:

1. Flush Your System:

WASA recommends that residents continue to follow WASA's and EPA's guidance regarding obtaining drinking water, as follows:

All consumers:

- Cold water should be used for drinking or cooking, as hot water will contain higher levels of

lead. Cold water should be heated on the stove for making hot beverages or cooking. Boiling your water will not remove lead.

- Flush water lines that have not been used for more than six hours by running the cold water ("flush") for at least 60 seconds prior to using the water from a faucet for drinking or cooking.

- Periodically, remove and clean the strainer/aerator device on your faucet to remove debris.

If you have a lead service line or believe that you have a lead service line:

- Draw water for drinking or cooking after another high water use activity such as bathing or washing your clothes so that a total of at least 10 minutes of flushing has occurred. (The large amount of water used will flush a significant amount of water from your home's pipes.)

Following the period of high water use:

Flush your kitchen tap for 60 seconds and then collect drinking water in clean containers and store in the refrigerator.

If you live in a high-rise building, letting the water flow before using it may not work to lessen your risk from lead. The plumbing systems have more, and sometimes larger, pipes than smaller buildings. Ask your landlord for help in locating the source of the lead and for advice on reducing the lead level.

2. Use Only Cold Water for Cooking and Drinking. Try not to cook with, or drink water from, the hot water tap. Hot water can dissolve more lead more quickly than cold water. If you need hot water, draw water from the cold tap and heat it on the stove.

3. Remove Debris from Faucet Strainers Regularly. Remove loose lead solder and debris from the plumbing materials installed in newly constructed homes, or homes in which the plumbing has recently been replaced, by removing the faucet strainers from all taps and running the water for three to five minutes. Thereafter, periodically remove the strainers and flush out any debris that has accumulated over time.

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4. Identify and Replace Lead Solder.

If your copper pipes are joined with lead solder that has been installed illegally since it was banned in 1986, notify the plumber who did the work and request that he or she replace the lead solder with lead-free solder. Lead solder looks dull gray, and when scratched with a key looks shiny. In addition, notify EPA Region's Safe Drinking Water Act Enforcement Branch at 215-814-5445 about the violation.

5. Find out Whether Your Service Line is Made of Lead. Determine whether or not the service line that connects your home or apartment to the water main is made of lead. The best way to determine if your service line is made of lead is by either hiring a licensed plumber to inspect the line or by contacting the plumbing contractor who installed the line. A licensed plumber can at the same time check to see if your home's plumbing contains lead solder, lead pipes, or pipe fittings that contain lead.

WASA also maintains records of the pipe materials for many addresses served by the public distribution system. E-mail us at WQP2003@dcwasa.com or call 202-787-2732 for information.

If the service line that connects your dwelling to the water main contributes more than 15 ppb to drinking water, after our comprehensive treatment program is in place, we are required to replace the portion of the line we own. If only part of the line is owned by WASA, we are required to provide the owner of the privately owned portion of the line with information on how to replace the privately owned portion of the service line, and offer to replace that portion of the line at the owner's expense.

If we replace only the portion of the line that we own, we also are required to notify you in advance and provide you with information on the steps you can take to minimize exposure to any temporary increase in lead levels that may result from the partial replacement, to take a follow-up sample at our expense from the line within 72 hours after the partial replacement, and to mail or otherwise provide you with the results of that sample within three business days of receiving the results. An acceptable replacement material is copper.

6. Have an Electrician Check Your Wiring. If grounding wires from the electrical system are attached to your pipes, corrosion may be greater. Check with a licensed electrician or your local electrical code to determine if your wiring can be grounded elsewhere. Do not attempt to change the wiring yourself, because improper grounding can cause electrical shock and fire hazards.

If Lead Level Persists

The steps described above will reduce the lead concentrations in your drinking water. However, if a water test indicates that the drinking water coming from your tap contains lead concentrations in excess of 15 ppb after flushing, or after we have completed our ac-

tions to minimize lead levels, then you may want to take the following additional measures:

7. Purchase or Lease a Home Treatment Device. Home treatment devices are limited in that each unit treats only the water that flows from the faucet to which it is connected, and all of the devices require periodic maintenance and replacement. Devices such as reverse osmosis systems or distillers can effectively remove lead from your drinking water. Some activated carbon filters may reduce lead levels at the tap; however, all lead reduction claims should be investigated. Be sure to check the actual performance of a specific home treatment device before and after installing the unit.

8. Purchase Bottled Water for Drinking and Cooking.

For More Information

You can consult a variety of sources for additional information:

- Your family doctor or pediatrician can perform a blood test for lead and provide you with information about the health effects of lead.

Government agencies that can be contacted include:

- To get information about your community's water supply, e-mail us at WQP2003@dcwasa.com or call 202-787-2732. A list of local laboratories that have been certified by EPA for testing water quality is below.

- The DC Department of Health at 202-535-2690 can provide you with information about the health effects of lead and how you can have your child's blood tested.

EPA-Certified Laboratories

The following is a list of some EPA-approved laboratories that you can call to have your water tested for lead.

AMA Analytical Services, Inc.

4475 Forbes Boulevard
Lanham, MD 20706
301-459-2640

GPL Laboratories, LLLP

202 Perry Parkway
Gaithersburg, MD 20877
301-926-6802

Anabell Environmental, Inc.

8648 Dakota Drive
Gaithersburg, MD 20877
301-548-9425

Metropolitan Environmental Testing Services, Inc.

179 Smallwood Village Center
Waldorf, MD 20602
301-870-1995

Envirometric Laboratories, Inc.

354 Hungerford Drive, Suite 100
Rockville, MD 20850
301-838-3091

WSSC, LSG

12245 Tech Road
Silver Spring, MD 20904
301-206-7580

For more information, visit WASA's Web site at www.dcwasa.com. This article is available at the Web site in Spanish.



Courtney B. Williams won the Hank Carde Lifetime Achievement Award.

Office On Aging Employee Wins Award for HIV Work

Solutions Incorporated presented Courtney B. Williams, community planner with the D.C. Office on Aging, with the 2003 Hank Carde Lifetime Achievement Award during its recent awards ceremony.

Williams was recognized for his work through the years as an advocate, organizing workshops and conferences on HIV and its impact on the aging population. "As a community we must realize that older persons are impacted by this disease, and bring together health and social service providers, policymakers and planners, representatives of the aging network and others to raise AIDS awareness and seek solutions," Williams said.

Last year, 20 percent of all new infections in the District were in persons over 50. Currently, almost 10 percent (approximately 2,000) of HIV cases are in persons over 50, and the number continues to grow.

Barney Neighborhood House, an Office on Aging Senior Service Network Agency, has an HIV Prevention Program funded by the D.C. Department of Health, Administration for HIV/AIDS.

Solutions is an organization that was created five years ago for the purpose of discussing possible strategies and solutions to combat the rising number of persons with HIV in the District. The award ceremony recognizes persons and individuals in the community who are making a difference in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

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Community Calendar

April events

6th • 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Columbia Senior Center will be attending Congresswoman Eleanor Norton’s Special Senior Day at a Medicare Town Hall meeting at 345 Cannon House Office Building, 1st and C Streets, S.E. Learn how to survive the new Medicare prescription drug benefits. Lunch will be provided. For details, call 202-328-3270.

7th

If you live in Wards 2 or 5 and want to have a kidney or diabetes screening, call Vivian Grayton of the Greater Washington Urban League at (202) 529-8701 for details.

7th • 10 to 11:30 a.m.

Pre-Easter prayer breakfast at the Emery Recreation Center, 5801 Georgia Ave., N.W. The event will feature a guest speaker from a local church and breakfast in celebration of Easter. The cost is \$5. There is limited seating. For details, contact Linda Nishida, D.C. Department of Parks and Recreation, at 202-282-0748.

9th • 9:30 a.m.

You are invited to celebrate spring and the Easter season at a breakfast with your friends at Columbia Senior Center. Senior Pastor William A.D. Spence, II of Harvest Life Fellowship will be the guest speaker. To confirm your attendance, call Monica Carroll at 202-328-3270, ext. 11.

9th • 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Enjoy a picnic with EOFULA Spanish Senior Center at the National Building Museum park. Meet at EOFULA, located at 1842 Calvert St., N.W. For more information, call Alberto Camacho at 202-483-5800.

13th

Do you need information on Pepco, utility bills or your phone bill? Call Vivian Grayton of the Greater Washington Urban League, 202-529-8701 for details.

13th • 1 p.m.

Join the seniors at Columbia Senior Center for their annual spring concert. Columbia Senior Center is located at 1250 Taylor Street, N.W. For more information, call 202-328-3270.

13th • 11 a.m.

Attend a senior fashion show as your peers showcase their fashion in style on the runway. The event will take place at the Omni-Shoreham Hotel, 2500 Calvert St., N.W. at Connecticut Ave. A fully catered lunch will be served. Business attire is required. Tickets are limited; call Department of Parks and Recreation at 202-282-0748 for tickets and prices.

16th • 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The Adult Abuse Prevention Committee of the District will host a consumer workshop at AARP Brickfield Center, 601 E Street, N.W. Conference topics include “Do Not Call Registry,” “Identity Theft,” “Pay Day Loan Scams,” “Automatic Withdrawal Traps” and “Medicare and Medicaid Fraud Issues.” Registration is free and lunch will be provided. Space is limited. Call 202-434-2186 to register.

16th • 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Try this picnic if you missed the last outing with EOFULA Spanish Senior Center. The picnic will take place at the U.S. National Arboretum. Meet at EOFULA, located at 1842 Calvert St., N.W. For information, call Alberto Camacho at 202-483-5800.

21st • 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Go to the track with Columbia Senior Center! The center will be heading to Charles Town Racetrack. Donation is \$15, but there is a \$5 rebate. Lunch is on your own. For details, call 202-328-3270.

21st • 1 p.m.

The American Cancer Society will give a lecture on breast cancer at the EOFULA Spanish Senior Center, 1842 Calvert St., N.W. Find out details that could save your life or the life of someone you love. For details, call 202-483-5800.

23rd • 10 a.m. - noon

Save money on your prescriptions! Columbia Senior Center will host a Benefits Check-up/Together Rx presentation to teach seniors how to save on high prescription costs. To qualify, seniors must be enrolled in Medicare, must not have an annual income exceeding \$28,000 for individuals or \$38,000 for couples, and must not have public or private prescription drug coverage. Lunch will be provided at no cost. Call Nancy Piness at 202-328-3270, ext. 12, if you would like to attend.

23rd • 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Go shopping with EOFULA Spanish Senior Center at the Opportunity Shop. EOFULA is located at 1842 Calvert St., N.W. For information, call Alberto Camacho at 202-483-5800.

30th • 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

End March with a picnic at the U.S. Botanical Gardens with EOFULA Spanish Senior Center. Meet at the center, located at 1842 Calvert St., N.W. For information, call Alberto Camacho at 202-483-5800.

May events

May 3rd • 1:00 p.m.

Celebrate Cinco de Mayo at Columbia Senior Center. Join other seniors for dancing, light refreshments, and take a

chance on breaking the piñata. For more information, contact Monica Carroll at 202-328-3270, ext. 11.

May 6th • 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The D.C. Office on Aging, the D.C. Senior Citizens Clearinghouse and the Office on Aging Senior Service Network will present the 40th Annual Senior Citizens’ Day and Health Expo on Thursday, May 6 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the D.C. Armory, 2001 East Capitol St., S.E. The doors will open at 10 a.m. The theme for the event is “Aging Well, Living Well.” Senior Day will feature free health screenings, health and wellness exhibits, fitness demonstrations, line dancing, music, live entertainment and lunch. The event is free, but tickets are required for entry. For tickets, call 202-727-6604.

May 22nd

Join the Greater Washington Urban League, Inc., Division of Aging & Health Services fundraiser in May for a day in Strasburg, Pa. to go shopping and experience the play *Abraham & Sarah - A Journey of Love*. For reservations, call Vivian Grayton of the Greater Washington Urban League at 202-529-8701.

Ongoing

Seniors wanted for the Call-N-Ride program, a discounted taxicab service offered to seniors 60 years and older. If you are interested in enrolling in the Call-N-Ride program and you are a resident of Ward 2 or 5, call Ms. Hooks at the Greater Washington Urban League, Inc., Division of Aging and Health Services.

The Greater Washington Urban League, Division of Aging and Health Services, is seeking caregivers who are caring for seniors 60 years or older and need assistance. They are also seeking seniors residing in Ward 2 who could benefit from social service and home-bound meal assistance. Call Karen Cobble or Le’Anetta Obasanjo at 202-529-8701.

Mondays 9:50 a.m. and Wednesdays 1 p.m.

Get Fit with Vanessa! Vanessa Williams-Harvin, fitness coordinator, will conduct low-impact aerobics and Pilates classes for seniors at the Washington Seniors Wellness Center. The center is at 3001 Alabama Ave., S.E. For more information, call 202-581-9355. A physician’s statement is needed for participation.

Mondays and Wednesdays • 1 to 2 p.m.

Computer classes for seniors will be given by the EOFULA Spanish Senior Center. Keep up with technology and learn the basics of the computer. For details, call Alberto at 202-483-5800.

NATIONAL ALCOHOL SCREENING DAY
Thursday, April 8 • 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The Department of Health Addiction Prevention and Recovery Administration is coordinating National Alcohol Screening Day in the District. The purpose of Alcohol Screening Day is to make more people aware of the problems associated with alcohol abuse, and to provide screening, education and literature. The National Household Survey on Drug Abuse reports that over 5 million persons 55 or older were “binge” drinkers, and more than 1 million were heavy alcohol users.

According to the National Institute on Aging, alcohol slows down brain activity. Alcohol affects alertness, judgment, coordination and reaction time. Drinking increases the risk of falls and accidents. Over time, heavy drinking can permanently damage the brain and central nervous system, as well as the liver, heart, kidneys and stomach.

Research shows that it takes less alcohol to affect older people than younger ones. As people age, the body’s ability to absorb and dispose of alcohol and other drugs changes. Anyone who drinks should check with their doctor or pharmacist to find out more about alcohol and prescription drug interactions. To find out more about alcohol abuse, attend National Alcohol Screening Day at one of the following locations, or call 202-442-9171.

SCREENING LOCATIONS

Congress Heights Senior Wellness Center • 3500 Martin Luther King, Jr., Ave., S.E.
Model Cities Senior Wellness Center • 1901 Evarts St., N.E.

SPOTLIGHT ON AGING

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Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination which is prohibited by the Act. In addition, harassment based on any of the above protected categories is prohibited by the Act. Discrimination in violation of the Act will not be tolerated. Violators will be subjected to disciplinary action.

The Office on Aging is in partnership with the District of Columbia Recycling Program.